United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1406
3 June 1993

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ "New mechanism" could be necessary instrument for stability in Cambodia if supported by winning parties in election, says Secretary-General's Special Representative for Cambodia after meeting with Prince Sihanouk.

+ Some $70 million pledged to Inter-agency Humanitarian Programme for Angola at Geneva donors meeting; humanitarian situation in country described as extremely serious.

+ Secretary-General, in Algeria, holds working session with Foreign Minister on Western Sahara, Somalia, Cambodia and conflict in former Yugoslavia.

+ Member States urged to transfer frozen Iraqi assets or contribute voluntarily to escrow account as "no funds are currently available" from that account, according to report by Secretary-General.

+ Mission of United Nations Operation in Somalia to visit north-east Somalia on 7 June with view to promoting security and reconstruction in region.

+ UNDP Administrator warns Governing Council that peace might be pursued at price of development; notes that peace-keeping budgets have risen sharply while contributions to UNDP have fallen.

* * *

The Secretary-General's Special Representative for Cambodia, Yasushi Akashi, was informed today by Prince Sihanouk at the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh that he is forming a new government under his leadership which would bring together the Front Uni National pour un Cambodge Indépendant, Neutre, Pratique et Coopératif (FUNCINPEC) and the Cambodian People's Party (CPP). Under the 1991 Paris Agreements, the Constituent Assembly elected last week has three months to produce a new Constitution and only after that would a new government be formed.

(more)

For information media--not an official record

In his statement, Mr. Akashi expressed the hope that a "new mechanism" would be a necessary instrument for stability in Cambodia on the basis of the democratic will of the people, if it enjoyed the support of the two largest parties which have emerged as the winners of the elections. Prince Sihanouk had assured him that he, as President of the Supreme National Council in Cambodia, would continue his full cooperation with the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in fulfilling its remaining responsibilities until a new Constitution is adopted.

Expressing appreciation for "the vital role" of Prince Sihanouk as the national reconciliator, Mr. Akashi said that "this new initiative" to resolve the difficulties which face Cambodia after the elections was "extremely important".

* * *

Some $70 million was pledged to the Inter-Agency Programme for Angola at a meeting of donors which began today in Geneva, according to a United Nations spokesman. The meeting was chaired by Secretary-General's Special Representative for Angola, Margaret J. Anstee.

The Programme for Angola, which was organized by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and launched on 21 May, requires a total of $226 million, the spokesman noted. He said the situation in the country was extremely serious, but had not received the attention it deserved. It was estimated that about 1,000 civilians were dying each day directly or indirectly because of military activity in the conflict in Angola.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who began a two-day visit to Algeria yesterday, held today in Algiers a working session with Foreign Minister Redha Malek. The talks dealt with the Western Sahara question and in particular efforts to implement Security Council resolution 809 (1993) on the criteria for registration in the Sahara referendum. Issues of concern in Africa, particularly Somalia, were also covered, as well as the situation in Cambodia and the conflict in former Yugoslavia.

The Secretary-General was later received by the President of the High Council of State, Ali Kafi. The Secretary-General will meet the President again during the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Summit in Cairo.

The Secretary-General also met with Algerian Prime Minister, Belaïd Abdessalem.

* * *

No funds were currently available from the escrow account created by the Security Council after the Persian Gulf war to pay for damages and other expenses as a result of that war, according to a report by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to Security Council, dated 27 May. He therefore urged

(more)

Member States that hold frozen Iraqi assets to transfer those funds or make significant new voluntary contributions to the escrow account.

The entire total of $101.5 million received into the escrow account as of 30 April, 1993, had already been designated for a number of United Nations activities in Iraq, including the Special Commission on Iraqi Disarmament, the Compensation Commission, costs incurred by the United Nations in facilitating the return of Kuwaiti property seized by Iraq, the Boundary Demarcation Commission and humanitarian activities.

The Commission on Iraqi Disarmament was in need of $34 million over the coming months and funds were also needed to pay for the implementation of a $24 million contract with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Cost estimates of the ongoing United Nations Inter-agency Humanitarian Programme for Iraq had not been definitively established, but the projected total for the period from 1 April to 31 March 1994 amounted to $489 million. No further funds were available from the escrow account at the present time for these activities, the report said.

* * *

A special mission from the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) will visit Bossano in north-east Somalia on 7 June to see how the Operation can improve security and promote rehabilitation and reconstruction in the region. It will be headed by Omar Halim, Director of the Special Representative's Policy Planning Group, and will include senior officials from the military, justice, humanitarian and political divisions of UNOSOM II.

The mission will work closely with local officials and community leaders, and some members will remain in the region for several days. The undertaking follows a series of visits to the region by UNOSOM Political Affairs Officers who facilitated the process of forming District and Regional Councils. That process will lead to the election of representatives to the Transitional National Council.

* * *

There is a high risk that peace is being pursued at the price of development, William Draper, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) told its Governing Council as it took up his 1992 report today. Mr. Draper noted that peace-keeping budgets had risen more than sevenfold since 1991 -- to $3.7 billion this year -- while voluntary contributions to the Programme had fallen by 10 per cent.

No world order worthy of international support could be based on force alone, Mr. Draper stressed. He said the UNDP could be of unique service to the Secretary-General's "An Agenda for Peace", given its international presence and its focus on human development.

(more)

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa, told the Council that the expected peace dividend for Africa had not materialized. While the concept of development now included human development and governance, economic growth remained essential, she said.

The 48-member Council's fortieth session will continue until 18 June.

* *** *